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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/631,855	08/03/2000	Richard Rowe	IGTECH.0007P	9950

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EXAMINER

DURAN, ARTHUR D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3622

DATE MAILED: 06/08/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/631,855

Applicant(s)

ROWE, RICHARD

Examiner

Arthur Duran

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 April 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-26 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-26 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

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DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-26 have been examined.

Response to Amendment

2. The Amendment filed on 4/12/05 is sufficient to overcome the Rowe and Luciano reference. A new reference has been combined with Luciano.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Luciano (6,500,067) in view of LeStrange (5,470,079).

Luciano discloses a casino environment, games at the casino, gaming devices at the casino (col 1, lines 15-40) .

Luciano further discloses that these gaming device (Player Terminals) can issue cash vouchers at the gaming device itself (col 1, lines 50-53) that vouchers issued by a gaming device can be used at other gaming devices (col 1, lines 5-62).

Luciano further discloses that the vouchers are encoded with indicia that are readable by a machine (col 2, lines 1-15; col 8, lines 32-37; col 8, lines 65-67). Therefore, since the gaming

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devices read the vouchers, the gaming devices are also machines. Luciano also discloses that the gaming device is a machine (col 7, lines 40-45 and col 7, lines 55-57).

Also, the online Merriam-Webster dictionary at www.m-w.com defines 'device' as 'f : a piece of equipment or a mechanism designed to serve a special purpose or perform a special function' and 'machine' as 'f : a mechanically, electrically, or electronically operated device for performing a task <a calculating *machine*> <a card-sorting *machine*> g : a coin-operated device <a cigarette *machine*>'.

Also, Luciano discloses a bar coded ticket and a scanner (Abstract).

Luciano discloses a handheld scanner (Fig. 4).

Luciano further discloses that the gaming device can issue cash and/or cash vouchers (col 2, line 63-col 3, line 3).

Luciano further discloses checking cash value amounts (col 5, lines 28-42; col 6, lines 40-51; col 6, line 62-col 7, line 5).

Luciano further discloses accepting voucher, cash, and an audit printer (Fig. 3, items 34, 38, and 'Audit Printer').

Luciano is considered to disclose the step of accepting and crediting at a gaming machine including retrieving money and reading cash vouchers unique identifying element, and reconciling and sorting (column 5 lines 23-43).

Luciano further discloses that the voucher can be utilized at a gaming terminal and that the central system tracks retrieves, tracks, organizes, and verifies the utilization of vouchers (col 1, lines 40-col 2, line 15).

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Additionally, Luciano discloses a player terminal (PT) connected to a central system (Fig. 1). Luciano discloses that vouchers and currency can be accepted (Fig. 5, item 46) and that tickets and coins can be dispensed (Fig. 5, item 47, item 48). Luciano discloses that both the gaming device (PT) and cash exchange terminal (CET) can perform voucher, currency, ticket, coin exchanges (Fig. 5, col 3, lines 25-29). Luciano discloses that a PT is a player terminal or gaming device (col 3, lines 25-29). Luciano discloses the utilization of a voucher or cash ticket with bar code and other identifying information (Fig. 6; col 3, lines 28-31). Luciano discloses generating vouchers that can be utilized at PT (Fig. 7; Fig. 8) and that vouchers can be utilized at PT (Fig. 9) and that vouchers are validated (Fig. 9) and that a player can be given a voucher/ticket at the end of playing as an award credit for playing (Fig. 9, 'Player Removes Ticket'; Fig. 10). Luciano discloses that a player can utilize cash at a PT and that the user can reward the user with cash or a voucher/ticket (Fig. 12; Fig. 13; col 3, lines 57-61).

Luciano further discloses the utilization of cash or vouchers with gaming machines and that the vouchers can be tracked:

“(8) The applicants have invented a method and apparatus that can be, but need not necessarily be, cashless and does not require the player to insert cash at the gaming device itself. The applicants' method and apparatus prints a unique voucher from one of several different types of terminals on a gaming device network. The cash voucher is accepted by the networked gaming devices (player terminals or PTs) in order to play the games on those networked devices (preferably games of chance). The method and apparatus preferably allows for the issuance of a voucher from a cashier terminal operated by a cashier (CT), an optional

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mobile cashier terminal (MCT), an optional automated cash exchange terminal (CET), or from a player terminal (PT);

(9) When a voucher is issued, a record of the voucher and its corresponding value are preferably recorded on a database in a separate computer called a player account server (PAS). The voucher preferably may be redeemed for value at a CT or MCT. The voucher may also be used to enable the transfer of credits from the database to a PT, so that a player may elect to play at a different gaming device by generating a voucher on one PT and inserting it into another, without use of cash" (col 1, line 40-62).

Luciano further discloses the utilization of casino type gaming and that the Player Terminal (PT) can be a gaming device (col 1, lines 15-17; col 3, lines 25-29).

LeStrange discloses a gaming machine connected to a central computer (Fig. 1), that a gaming machine can utilize a variety of credit forms such as money, coins, bills, promos, debit and credit cards, vouchers, bills, and coupons, and that credit, cashless, and cash play are possible, and that the levels of these credits are monitored with meters (Fig. 2). LeStrange discloses that coins or cash (Fig. 3); credit or vouchers (Fig. 4a; Fig. 4b; Fig. 5b) can be utilized for game play.

LeStrange discloses that vouchers/coupons/tickets and/or cash can be utilized with gaming machines, that vouchers and/or cash can be utilized for payout, and that vouchers can be a printed ticket:

"(6) Today, the increased sophistication of gaming machine technology has greatly increased player options. For example, gaming machines have been devised which can accept currency in forms other than coin. An example of a gaming machine that is equipped with a bill

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acceptor for accepting paper currency is 10 described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,113,990. Indeed, gaming machine technology has advanced to such a stage that it is now possible for gaming machines to accept items of monetary value in forms other than cash. For example, slot machines and video gaming machines are now being built which are equipped with magnetic card readers or smart card readers that can accept monetary credit from a player account stored on casino credit cards, or from the player's commercial credit card. An example of such a gaming machine is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,038,022. In such machines, winnings can be credited to the card instead of being paid out in coin. Other forms of cashless gaming machines available today include machines that accept bar coded coupons and video lottery machines that offer many games, often of various kinds, within a single cabinet and which pay winnings on printed vouchers issued by the machine (col 1, line 41-65);

(7) The addition of these new forms of wagering and payout instruments has greatly complicated the machine accounting problem. For example, it is now possible for a player to input dollar bills or credit from a credit card into a gaming machine and cash out immediately without placing any bets. In this case, the game credit purchased and cashed in by a player has never become part of game activity. Because not all coins dispensed by a gaming machine are the result of game winnings, monitoring game activity is no longer a simple matter of tracing coin outflows and coin inflows. Accordingly, the calculation of hopper level and game win percentage must take into account "vended credits", i.e., credits purchased but not risked (col 1, line 65-col 2, line 10);

(30) "Collect" events, however, result in different actions. If the player requests a payout of the available game credit (as determined by collect decision block 310), the accounting

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system subtracts the amount of the available credit from the balance in the residual credit meter 32 (at block 314) until the residual credit meter is reduced to 0. If the residual credit meter has been reduced to 0, the system then increases the game out meter 37 by the excess of the amount collected over the previous balance in the residual credit meter, if any (as determined by decision block 316), and resets the game credit meter 30 at block 312 as was done during credit game play described above. However, in contrast with traditional coin hopper machines, in cashless gaming the machine may support several forms of payouts to the player. Accordingly, at blocks 320a, 320b and 320c the accounting model determines the form of payout made by the gaming machine. If the payout is to be added to the balance on the player's ABA or casino credit card account (decision block 320a), the accounting system stores this amount in the ABA credit out meter 66 or the credit card credit out meter 70, respectively, at block 322a. If, instead, the payout is to be in the form of a printed voucher (decision block 320b), the system increments the cash voucher meter 73 at block 322b as the ticket is printed. Finally, if the payout is to be made from the coin hopper (decision block 320c), the accounting system need not take any action (col 10, line 65-col 11, line 25).

LeStrange discloses monitoring and/or tracking and/or auditing the wide range of credit useable for gaming machines:

“(10) To further complicate the accounting problem, rules established by many gaming regulatory commissions require that all gaming locations account separately for all of the different forms of monetary value that can be accepted by modern gaming machines. Specifically, most jurisdictions require a complete audit of all wagers found in the coin and currency cash boxes. In machines equipped with coupon readers, the currency box may contain

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bar coded coupons of varying amounts in addition to cash. In the case of cashless wagers (e.g., those placed from player charge accounts), there may be no physical equivalent in either box. Yet the gaming locations's accounting system must provide an audit trail for each of these betting instruments. In addition, the rules require a separate accounting of the different forms of machine payouts. For example, where machine payouts are in the form of printed vouchers, the vouchers will be redeemed and stored at the redemption locations. Because the vouchers are relatively easy to forge or duplicate, the accounting system must also provide a record of these tickets against which payment can be made. To date, accounting system methodologies do not provide a convenient and unified mechanism for auditing betting activity in all of these different forms (col 2, line 39-61);

(6) The accounting meters 34 provide a complete record of all gaming activity at the gaming machine. Monetary flows are tracked by a plurality of drop meters 38, one drop meter 38 for each of the different forms of monetary value accepted by gaming machine 10. The coin drop meter 54 is known in the art and represents the total value of coins that have been diverted to a "drop bucket" in the gaming machine cabinet and thus can be collected by the casino. In accordance with the invention, a number of additional "drop" meters are provided that represent monetary value that is collected by the casino in all of its different forms. The drop meters include: a bill count drop meter 56 which counts all paper currency that has been inserted into a note acceptor; a promo drop meter 58, which counts all promotional credits that are received by the gaming machine from any source (including, e.g., credits from coupons or cards issued by the casino or from "bonus points" generated by the machine itself); a debit card drop meter 60, which counts all credits from debit memory cards (i.e., cards which cannot receive additional

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credit from the gaming machine); and a coin sale drop meter 62, which counts all credits received from a "change person's" memory card, which is inserted into the gaming machine to provide coins for a player in exchange for paper currency;

(7) The accounting meters 34 also include meters for tracking other monetary flows. For example, the bill and coupon denomination meters 72 provide a count of the number of bills of various denominations and the total number and value of bar coded coupons that have been received by the gaming machine. Credit card transactions for cashless game play are tracked in the ABA credit in meter 64, ABA credit out meter 66, credit card credit in meter 68 and credit card credit out meter 70. The difference between the credit in and credit out meters is equivalent to a credit card drop meter. The details of credit card accounting in conformance with the present invention are described below. Finally, for tracking an alternative form of monetary outflow, the cash voucher meter 73 counts the total value of all printed vouchers that have been issued by the machine (col 5, line 65-col 6, line 35);

(18) In this mode, gaming machine 10 is capable of accepting currency in forms other than coin and items having monetary value in forms other than cash. For example, gaming machine 10 can be equipped with a bill acceptor 14 for accepting paper currency or bar coded coupons instead of coins. In addition, gaming machine 10 may include a special card reader 12 for accepting promotional tickets or debit cards having a specified dollar amount available for gambling. These tickets or cards can be issued by casinos for promotional events or as a means for limiting the amount of money that a player can gamble in states where the maximum amount is specified by law. In this form of gambling, the player has the option of collecting the amount of credit purchased without placing any amount at risk and, therefore, the amount

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purchased cannot be reflected immediately in the game play meter 39. Accordingly, the accounting system segregates credit purchased but not risked from other credit available, such as that available from game winnings;

(19) FIG. 4 is a flow chart showing the operation of the accounting system during credit game play. At decision block 200, the system determines if items of monetary value have been inserted by the player. Once this has occurred, the system increments the game credit meter 30 (at block 202) to reflect the newly purchased game credit and also increments the residual credit meter 32 (at block 204) indicating that the credit purchased is not yet part of game play. At decision blocks 206a, 206b, 206c and 206d, the accounting system discerns which form of monetary value has been input by the player and increments the bill count, promotional, debit card or coin sale drop meters as appropriate (at blocks 208a, 208b, 208c and 208d). If paper currency has been input by the player, the accounting system also records the denomination of the bill inserted on the bill denomination meters 72 at block 210. If, instead, a bar coded coupon has been inserted, a meter representing the number of coupons accepted is incremented and another meter that tracks total coupon value is increased by the value of the coupon;

(20) At decision block 206b, the system determines whether "promotional" credit has been purchased. Usually, this is credit issued to a player by the gaming location as a reward or in connection with a promotional event. Because these credits do not represent income for the casino, they will not be accounted for among the currency or credit card drop meters. Rather, the accounting system will track these credits through the promo drop meter 58 (block 208b). It should be noted that in some states bar coded coupons, although often promotional in nature, must be counted as part of the casino's drop. Therefore, in these states the accounting system

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will accumulate credits from bar coded coupons on the bill count drop meter 56" (col 8, lines 1-54).

LeStrange discloses the utilization of a wide range of gaming machines:

"(2) FIG. 1 illustrates the preferred embodiment of a gaming machine system in accordance with the present invention. Box 10 represents a gaming machine which includes a structure for accepting currency or the equivalent from a player and for paying out cash or other items of monetary value. The system of the present invention can be used with a variety of different types of gaming machines such as slot machines, video poker games and video lottery systems. Gaming machine 10 can also be configured to accept cash in forms other than coin, and items of monetary value in forms other than cash. For example, gaming machine 10 can be equipped with a multiple card reader and key pad 12 for accepting payment in the form of credit cards, smart cards or other data cards containing player credit accounts. In addition, gaming machine 10 can be equipped with a note or bill acceptor 14 capable of accepting paper money or notes in various denominations or bar coded coupons" (col 4, line 55-col 5, line 5).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add LeStrange's wide range of casino games and accounting/auditing/tracking features for cash and cashless gaming machines to Luciano's cash and cashless gaming machines. One would have been motivated to do this in order to better audit the utilization of cash and cashless credits at gaming machines.

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Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-26 have been considered but are moot in grounds of the new rejection above. Please particularly note the additional citations, explanations, and reference added above starting with the section stating, "Additionally, Luciano discloses a player terminal (PT) connected to. . .".

Examiner notes that while specific references were made to the prior art, it is actually also the prior art in its entirety and the combination of the prior art in its entirety that is being referred to.

Conclusion

The following prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:

The references added to the Notice of References Cited disclose the utilize of cash and vouchers with gaming machines.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Arthur Duran whose telephone number is (571) 272-6718. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon- Fri, 8:00-4:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eric Stamber can be reached on (571) 272-6724. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Arthur Duran
Patent Examiner
5/27/05